

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-11

LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 SSO-00 SS-20 USIE-00

PA-04 PRS-01 INRE-00 NSC-07 NSCE-00 NEA-14 SP-03

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O 022210Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1378

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PANAMA 4484

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, PN

SUBJ: TORRIJOS SPEECH ON BANANA CONFLICT

SUMMARY: IN HARD-HITTING SPEECH TO LEADERS OF BANANA WORKERS' UNIONS AUGUST 1 GENERAL TORRIJOS EXPLAINED "BANANA WAR" AND ITS MEANING FOR PANAMA, EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR WORKERS' SUPPORT, CALLED FOR FURTHER SACRIFICES AND SAID GOP HAD BEEN SEEKING BANANA MARKETS AND WOULD "IF IT MUST," ACQUIRE BANANA COMPANIES. WHILE TORRIJOS SPEECH MIGHT HAVE BEEN IN PART BLUFF, ITS OVERALL THRUST INDICATED THAT IN STRUGGLE WITH COMPANIES PANAMA WOULD GO DOWN FIGHTING RATHER THAN ACCEPT APPEARANCE OF GIVING IN. END SUMMARY

1. TORRIJOS SET GOP-UNITED FRUIT CONFLICT IN LARGER CONTEXT OF STRUGGLE BETWEEN BANANA EXPORTING COUNTRIES AND TRANSNATIONAL BANANA CORPORATIONS. HE ACCUED THE LATTER OF WANTING TO PREVENT THE UNION OF BANANA PRODUCING COUNTRIES FROM BECOMING REALITY. THE COMPANIES PREVIOUSLY SOUGHT TO FORCE HONDURAS, WHICH BECAUSE OF ITS ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON BANANA EXPORTS WAS "WEAK LINK" AMONG EXPORTING COUNTRIES, TO YIELD AND  
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LOSE ITS DIGNITY. NOW, UNITED BRANDS, ACCORDING TO

TORRIJOS, HAS BEEN ORDERED TO BREAK THE "STRONGEST LINK IN THE CHAIN" -- PANAMA.

2. TORRIJOS WELCOMED THE STRUGGLE AND PLEDGED TO CARRY IT THROUGH TO ACHIEVE A UNION OF PRODUCING COUNTRIES AND THEREAFTER PREVENT CORPORATIONS FROM UNILATERALLY MAKING DECISIONS WHICH HARM PRODUCING COUNTRIES. HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION TO THE UNION LEADERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT AND PRAISED THEIR COURAGE AND "HIGH CAPACITY FOR SACRIFICE." HE ASSURED HIS LISTENERS THAT PANAMA WAS NOT STANDING ALONE; ALGERIA HAD SENT DELEGATION WHICH WOULD BE IN BANANA PLANTATIONS AUGUST 2 TO BEGIN WORKING ON AN AID PROGRAM. THIRD WORLD -- "THE UNION OF EXPLOITED COUNTRIES AGAINST EXPLOITING COUNTRIES -- IS WATCHING." "WE ARE WRITING HERE A PAGE OF DIGNITY IN THE HISTORY OF OUR PEOPLE." CUBA, HE SAID HAD OFFERED TO BUY BANANAS AS GESTURE OF SOLIDARITY.

3. TORRIJOS SAID PANAMA WOULD, IF IT MUST, ACQUIRE THE COMPANIES AND NOW HAD MISSIONS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES SEEKING TO FIND MARKETS FOR 30 MILLION BOXES OF BANANAS AND WAS CLOSE TO SOLVING MARKETING PROBLEM. HE THEN SAID HE AND REPRESENTATIVES OF GOP WOULD REMAIN IN CHIRIQUI TO PROVIDE DEFINITE ANSWER TO WORKERS WHO HAD NOT HAD DAILY BREAD FOR TWO WEEKS.

4. HIS SPEECH CLOSED WITH A CALL TO SACRIFICE AND A CHARGE THAT UNITED BRANDS HAD INSULTED PEOPLE OF CHIRIQUI AND BOACAS DEL TORO PROVINCES BY ARGUING THAT THEY WERE DEPENDENT UPON AND ALLIES OF COMPANY.

4. COMMENT: REFERENCE TO EXPROPRIATION AND FINDING MARKETS FOR BANANAS MAY BE BLUFF, BUT OVERALL THRUST OF TORRIJOS' SPEECH INDICATES THAT BANANA WAR CAN PROBABLY ONLY BE SETTLED WITH A "VICTORY," IN WHICH IT CAN BE MADE TO APPEAR AT LEAST UNITED BRANDS HAS ACCEPTED AND WILL ABIDE BY PANAMA'S LAWS.

JORDEN

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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** ETRD, PN, XK, (TORRIJOS HERRERA, OMAR)  
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**Type:** TE  
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